TO: Chair and Members  
Emergency & Community Services Committee

WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE

COMMITTEE DATE: February 2, 2011

SUBJECT/REPORT NO:  
Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (CS11017) (City Wide)

SUBMITTED BY:  
Joe-Anne Priel  
General Manager  
Community Services Department

PREPARED BY:  
Molly Elliott 905 546 2424 ext. 1782  
Brian Kreps 905-546-2424 ext. 4288  
Gillian Hendry 905-546-2424 ext. 4818

SIGNATURE:

Council Direction:
Not Applicable

Information:
In partnership with multiple community stakeholders, The City of Hamilton, is leading the development of a Housing and Homelessness Action Plan for Hamilton. This initiative is important because:

- 5338 households are waiting for Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) housing in Hamilton. This is a significant increase from two years ago and a testament to the need for more affordable housing;

- In one year, 5,653 individual men, women & children spent at least one night in an emergency shelter in Hamilton;

- In 2006, 21% of renter households paid more than 50% of their income on shelter. These people are at significant risk of homelessness;

- Research shows that adequate and affordable housing are linked to positive health outcomes for individuals, families and communities;

- Hamilton is projected to grow by approximately 26%, to 658,900 people by 2031. Hamilton needs to create 629 new rental housing units each year to meet the
housing demand of that population growth. With this growth also comes demographic changes that require an appropriate housing response;

It is important for Hamilton to have clear priorities in order to be prepared for future funding and partnership opportunities. The Action Plan will develop a community owned vision, shared goals, agreed upon priorities and strategies for housing and homelessness in Hamilton. This will allow for funding opportunities to be matched to local needs, instead of allowing available funding to drive community responses.

It is critical that the Action Plan be a collaborative effort given the complexity of housing and homelessness system and the multiple stakeholders involved. The central strategy for community input and involvement is the Housing and Homelessness Planning Group (Planning Group). The Planning Group is co-sponsored by the City of Hamilton and the Affordable Housing Flagship. It is comprised of more than 20 representatives from key housing and homelessness sectors. Appendix A to Report CS11017, Terms of Reference - Housing and Homelessness Planning Group outlines the Terms of Reference and current membership list. The Planning Group will shape the process for developing the Action Plan and ensure input from a wide variety of stakeholders to determine the Action Plan’s content.

The Housing and Homelessness Action Plan development process also includes the following community engagement activities:

- Focus groups, key informant interviews and surveys have been used to collect data as background for the Action Plan between November 2010 and February 2011;

- Stakeholder workshops to provide opportunities for members of the community to provide direct input to the plan;

- Information Bulletins will be produced to share information relating to the Action Plan’s development; and,

- Key Implementation Working Groups to ensure that the experiences and knowledge of key stakeholders are included in the Action Plan.
The project objectives are to:

- Have a community owned vision, shared goals and agreed upon strategies that will work to ensure everyone in Hamilton has a home;
- Plan for and build funding and partnership opportunities with the public, private and not-for-profit sectors;
- Inform and respond to key federal and provincial policies and programs;
- Regularly measure and report progress in achieving outcomes;
- Support ongoing community engagement and integrated planning over the long term; and,
- Support outcome measurement and evaluation of the Action Plan, as well as guide any future priority development and planning efforts.

Background

The provincial downloading of responsibility for administering human services to municipalities has led to an increased emphasis on local planning. Over the past decade the City has developed two important housing and homelessness planning initiatives. The Housing and Homelessness Action Plan will build on the work of Keys to the Home: A Housing Strategy for Hamilton (2004) (HCS04037(a&b)/PED04296) and Everyone Has A Home: A Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness (2007) (CS10044/ECS07020). Unlike these previous plans, it will address the full housing continuum from homelessness to affordable housing.

The past decade has also seen an emphasis on collaborative planning amongst service sectors. The Action Plan will incorporate learnings from current planning initiatives across Hamilton including:

- Immigration Strategy (2010)
- No-One Goes Hungry: Strategic Directions for Hamilton’s Emergency Food System (2009)
- Urban Official Plan (2009 pending Ministerial approval)
● The Blueprint for Emergency Shelters (2008)

● The Urban Aboriginal Community Plan (2007)

● Everyone Has A Home: A Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness (2007)

● Addressing the Needs of Street-Involved & Homeless Youth (2005)


**Linkage to Ontario’s Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy**

Municipal government’s role in planning for housing and homelessness services was recently recognized in the Provincial Government’s release of its Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy. The strategy states that Municipal Service Managers must establish local vision, engage the community to determine local needs and outcomes and participate in local planning. As part of the new Social Housing legislation, Municipal Service Managers must develop local housing and homelessness plans. Plans will need approval from local Councils and will likely need to be submitted to the Province by the end of 2012. It is anticipated that work on the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan will be preparation towards meeting Provincial expectations.
Terms of Reference
Housing and Homelessness Planning Group

Mandate

The Housing and Homelessness Action Plan Planning Group will work together with the City of Hamilton Housing & Homelessness Division project team to guide the development of the Housing & Homelessness Action Plan.

The Planning Group is to be a working committee that will focus on:

- The process for developing the Action Plan and opportunities to ensure inclusion of input from a wide variety of stakeholders
- Making key strategic decisions to guide the formulation of the Action Plan content

This will include identifying desired system outcomes, setting priorities, strategies, targets and timelines based on various forms of evidence placed before them. The group will consider multiple options, consider competing and complementing priorities and make planning decisions that work in the best interest of the Housing and Homelessness system in Hamilton.

It is important to note that the mandate of the Planning Group is not to duplicate the City’s role of Service Manager for housing and homelessness, but rather to work with and advise the City to help it achieve its service planning responsibilities as Service Manager. As well, the Planning Group is not an employer in terms of managing and directing City staff resources, but rather advisory to City staff. Nor is the Planning group a City Council appointed citizen advisory committee reporting to Council. Planning Group members must ensure that they are not representing an individual agency or organization, but rather representing a sector, network or collaborative.

Governance

The Planning Group is co-sponsored by the Affordable Housing Flagship and the City of Hamilton. The Affordable Housing Flagship, in consultation with the City Project Team, will appoint flagship members to the Planning Group who meet the qualifications outlined below. The Planning Group is accountable jointly to the City of Hamilton Housing & Homelessness Division and the Affordable Housing Flagship.

Membership

The Planning Group will be comprised of approximately 20 members. Given the depth and breadth of the housing and homelessness system, representation on this Planning
Group from all sectors and stakeholder groups is not possible. Therefore, it will be part of this group’s responsibility to ensure:

- All key perspectives are being sought out during the planning process
- There is effective communication going out to all key stakeholder groups, committees and community collaborative regarding the status and results of the planning process

Approximately one-third of the membership will be appointed by the Affordable Housing Flagship, representing the affordable housing spectrum of the continuum. The remaining members will be City staff (3-4 members) and members from the stakeholder community that can bring some key skills and experience to the table regarding such as:

- The housing needs of vulnerable groups in our community;
- Service system planning and outcome measurement;
- Broad community linkages beyond just those directly related to housing and homelessness;
- Clear understanding of how to apply an inclusion lens to planning;
- Collaborative thinking and a value for collaborative work; and,
- Recognition of the limits to their knowledge and value the lived experience and expertise of various stakeholders.

**Committee Chairs**

The Planning Group will be co-chaired by the Director of the Housing & Homelessness Division, City of Hamilton and an Affordable Housing Flagship member.

**Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality**

Members of the Planning Group have a duty to make decisions solely in terms of the best interest of the community.

1. Members will not act in order to gain financial or other material benefit personally or for their agency/organization.

2. There may be times when members will be required to treat discussions, documents or other information relating to the work of the Planning Group in a confidential manner.
3. Incidence of failure to comply with these terms for code of conduct or conflict of interest will be addressed by the Planning Group Co-Chairs in consultation with the Planning Group.

**Expectations**

- All members will be active participants in meetings and in the general activities of the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan development process
- When attendance is not possible for members a designated alternate will attend
- Project Staff will provide necessary information in a timely manner (5 working days prior to meeting)
- Planning Group members will review materials in advance of meetings and be prepared to discuss them
- Planning Group members represent networks, collaboratives and/or sectors. They do not represent individual or agency interests.
- All members act as conduits of information to and from the various agencies, collaboratives and committees they participate in.

**Timing**

The Planning Group will begin in October 2010. The group will meet on a monthly basis or on an as needed basis for the duration of the Action Plan development process. It is anticipated that the work of the Planning Group will be completed by December 2011. Participants should expect at minimum 3.5 hours of meeting time per month and 3.5 hours of preparation time per month.
Planning Group Membership (as of December 20, 2010)

- Brent Barnes (Canadian Mortgage & Housing Corporation)
- Tony Brutto (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing)
- Carol Cowan (Hamilton Emergency Shelters Integration & Co-ordination Committee)
- Karen Davis (Social Housing)
- Mara Fortino (Service Canada)
- Gillian Hendry (Housing & Homelessness Division) (Co-Chair)
- Loretta Hill-Finnamore (Street Youth Planning Collaborative)
- Larry Huibers (Affordable Housing Flagship) (Co-Chair)
- Bill Janssen (City of Hamilton Planning/Strategic Services/Special Projects)
- Cindy Kinnon (Supportive Housing Network)
- Cindy-Sue McCormack-Montana (Hamilton Executive Directors’ Aboriginal Coalition)
- Jeff Neven (Affordable Housing Flagship/Domiciliary Hostels)
- Brenda Osborne (Social Housing)
- Meaghan Ross (Tenant Advisory Committee)
- Joanne Santucci (Emergency Food System)
- Barb Terry (Ministry of Community Social Services)
- Medora Uppal (Woman’s Abuse Working Group)
- Renee Wetselaar (Affordable Housing Flagship)
- Allan Whittle (Affordable Housing Flagship/Housing Development)
- Conrad Zurini (Affordable Housing Flagship/Housing Development)

The Project Team Members from Housing & Homelessness Division are:

- Dave Brodati
- Molly Elliott
- Brian Kreps
- Bob McKnight
- Jenny Vengris